

TECHNIQUE AND APPARATUS FOR USING NODE ID AS VIRTUAL PRIVATE  
NETWORK (VPN) IDENTIFIERS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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A technique is provided for managing VPN packet flows over shared access data networks. Each node in the shared access network typically has an identifier or ID associated with it which is used at a Head End of the shared access network to uniquely identify that particular node from the other nodes in the network. According to the technique of the present invention, the node ID may be used at the Head End of the network to identify not only the corresponding node, but also to identify any virtual private networks (VPNs) of which the corresponding node is a member. Using the technique of the present invention, nodes which are members of the same VPN within a shared access network may exchange packets in a manner which does not require the packets to be routed outside the shared access network.

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